suffering of self-exile, it has been decided to leave them to be covered by State Freedom Fighter's Pension Scheme.

(c) Does not arise.

Afghan citizens in India

1116. SHRI SWARAJ KAUSHAL: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) what is the exact number of Afghan citizens in India;

(b) how many of them enjoy refugee status;

(c) what is the policy of Government of India in regard to their continued stay/return in the changed situation in Afghanistan;

(d) whether some of them have applied for Indian citizenship; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI CHENNAMANENI VIDYA SAGAR RAO): (a) The number of registered Afghan citizens in India is 18826.

(b) Government of India has not accorded refugees status to Afghan nationals staying in the country; however, there are 11,696 Afghans registered with United Nationals High Commissions For Refugees (UNHCR) as refugees.

(c) Afghan nationals are being permitted to stay in India on humanitarian grounds. However, to maintain some pressure on these persons to return to their home visa extension is granted to them on yearly basis.

(d) and (e) Yes, Sir. The Government of India have granted citizenship to 41 Afghans under section 5 (1) (a) and 132 Afghans under section 6(1), of Citizenship Act, 1955, so far.